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Art by Nava Mach '27.

Haverford's Admission Alterations Post-Affirmative Action

BY ZHAO GU GAMMAGE ON NOVEMBER 1, 2023 | FEATURES

As the first early decision deadline is today, admissions officers are preparing to take a different approach when reading applications. Over the summer, the Supreme Court <u>ruled</u> to end affirmative action, the ability for colleges to consider an applicant's race, impacting admission offices across the country.

Haverford College has notably been in favor of affirmative action, joining in a <u>2020 affidavit</u> with other liberal arts colleges defending the practice, citing that it helps to ensure a diverse student body. In their <u>statement responding to the court ruling</u>, the College states that they will work on ways that their admission process "could be made to align with the Court's ruling," while still upholding Haverford's values of diversity and equity.

Jess Lord, the Vice President and Dean of Admission and Financial Aid, outlines two concrete ways Haverford's admissions process will change. One is that admissions officers will be unable to see applicants' race or ethnicity while reading applications. Lord explains how the Office of Admission has "a sort of dashboard that lays out all sorts of information about a student: their sex assigned at birth, their race or ethnicity, their citizenship. We're removing race and ethnicity from that."

Lord added that the Office will have to adjust how they train application readers, "to make it clear to readers that racial status cannot be a factor and cannot be a consideration in our decision-."

The ruling <u>states</u> that colleges are able to take a student's race into account as long as the discussion of race is "concretely tied to a quality of character or unique ability that the particular applicant can contribute to the university."

As a result, they will not know the racial composition of the class at any point throughout the admission process. "We can't look to see the makeup of the admitted group so far, which is something that we would do as we are always thinking about the overall diversity of the incoming class," Lord explains.

While the decision bans admission offices from directly tying an applicant's race to whether they are admitted, admission offices can continue to ask the question.

Haverford will continue to ask applicants to select their race and ethnicity but will not be able to use that information to influence their decision. Lord clarifies that "We will still be able to use [applicants' race and ethnicity] for data analysis as long as it's not directly influencing any decision that we're making."

Lord says that the consideration of race at Haverford will still be allowed, "As long as we are making our decision based off qualities and characteristics, how ever a student has developed those qualities and characteristics is not what we're basing our decision on."

For the most part, Haverford's admission process won't change much. Lord explains, "we have a lot of confidence that our process doesn't need to change dramatically. We don't treat it and have not treated it as a box that was checked but rather as a piece of information a student has shared with us that helps us understand their identities and their lived experiences."

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Despite the SCOTUS decision impacting admission processes, schools like Haverford can still ensure a racially diverse applicant pool through recruiting. Haverford's Office of Admission will focus on strengthening and increasing their partnerships with recruiting companies to ensure they have a diverse applicant pool.

Haverford partners with the national organization QuestBridge, which pairs low-income, high-achieving applicants with elite schools. Locally, they are looking to increase their partnership with Heights, formerly known as Philly Futures, which pairs Black and Brown and first-generation Philadelphia students with internships and colleges.

Haverford's financial aid will also not change. Lord clarifies that "Because we meet need and apply our policies to every student who applies for aid the same way, there's not any kind of race-based component to our financial aid process."

Haverford will also continue to take Quaker affiliation and legacy status into account. However, unlike Harvard and other schools, Haverford's incoming classes do not have significant numbers of legacy students. In the incoming class of 2027, around two percent are Quakers and around 10% are legacies of any kind, according to Lord.

Over the past ten years, the number of nonwhite students enrolling at Haverford has increased by 54%. Currently, the school is 51% nonwhite, which includes domestic students identifying as Black, Asian, Latinx, multiracial, Native American, and Pacific Islander, up from 33% in 2012, per the school's Common Data Set.

Despite the school cultivating an increased racial diversity over the past 20 years, the ending of race-conscious admissions at other schools has led to a decrease in Black and Latinx students on campus. The percentage of Black domestic students at Haverford has been declining as well, according to the racial demographics in the school's 2030 Strategic Plan.

Regardless of how the admitted class of 2028 looks, Lord reassures "There's never a student who gets in solely because of any one aspect of who they are."

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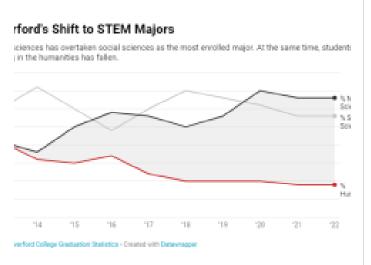
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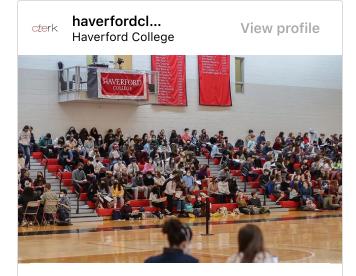
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As the first early decision deadline approaches, admissions officers are preparing to take a different approach when reading applications, following the Supreme Court's decision to end affirmative action. Haverford, which has been a notable supporter of affirmative action, must now adjust its admissions practices. Read more about the post-Affirmative Action process of Haverford College Admissions in the new article by Editor-in-Chief Zhao Gu Gammage '25, linked in our bio.

Pictured: Original art for The Clerk by Nava Mach '27

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As the fall semester approaches its midpoint, Haverford students are preparing for Plenary, a biannual event that serves as a platform for raising, discussing, and debating critical campus issues. This Sunday, November 5th, students will consider three resolutions, as well as ratify the Alcohol Policy. Read the Pre-Plenary rundown by Associate Editor Paeton Smith-Hiebert '26, linked in our bio.

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At the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year, returning Haverford students were dismayed to find that Dining Services had drastically reduced the amount of meal swipes students could use at the Coop and Library Café on the traditional meal plan. However, the alterations to the plan were not made for no reason. Read about the Dining Center's attempts to adjust amidst the pandemic in the new article by News & Opinions Editor Cade Fanning '26, linked in our bio.

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